

Sleazy Criticism (in progress)

a. analysis of the range of discussion of paracinema:

total dismissal from high culture position; dismissal from mass culture position;

Guilty Pleasures (selected canonization from limited knowledge base); Golden

Turkey (invested dismissal from broad knowledge base); selective/dis

riminantong fandom (Danny Peary, Vale & Juno, Psychoronic, Billy Bob

Thornton, etc.), enthusiastic fandom (fanzines, festivals, etc.) Add new academic

analysis (industrial--Heffernan; cultural--Brottman, Glynn, Jancovich;

documentary--Roscoe, Gaines)

b. ironic spectatorship (discuss camp, Sconce, etc.)

c. the assumption of naive spectatorship (who is the narrator addressing) using

DVD Verdict description:

But there is another doubling in the response. Reviewing the DVD issue of

Mondo Freudo and *Mondo Bizarro*, Bill Gibron offers this observation:

Here's the dilemma with *Mondo Bizarro*, *Mondo Freudo*, and frankly, any of the Mondo style movies that have been made in the last 30 years. Your enjoyment of these faux photologues will be directly linked to the amount of acceptance you give them. You either buy the artifice, which means you will believe in the "behind the scenes," "candid camera," "people caught in the act of being perverted" approach offered and spend several minutes in mild shock as "real" sexual sensationalism unfolds before your beleaguered eyes. Or, you could see through the setups and find the whole "actually happened" pretense hilarious, in which case you giggle along with the staged sin shows and slave auctions and

wonder if the early '60s audience (mostly men in raincoats) took time from their personal "fiddling" to notice how boldly fake most all of these movies are. True, the guy who pushes needles through his cheeks and sleeps on a bed of nails is as outwardly legit as Kreskin, but his skills are given a definite John Edwards tarnish in the presentation here. Perhaps you will be like the majority, and find *Mondo Bizarro* and *Mondo Freudo* exceptionally trashy and tasteless. Even without the usually standard animal mutilation and gore footage, the notion of spying on hapless women as they change clothes or poor Mexican girls (even if they are obviously off-market models) being sold into slavery looks more sleazy than spicy. As the forerunner to the far more reprehensible *Faces of Death* and *Caught on Tape* category of exploitation exposés, these innocent attempts at shirking indecency laws are like visual versions of a double dare. Here, fortunately, you only have to put up with distorted mammaries and the occasionally unfortunate mouth.¹

Yet, it's hard to say that there is anyone who actually belongs to the naive viewer category.

d. critical disagreement: form vs. content, lame-brained adaptations of Brecht, Cahiers, Bakhtin, etc. using Wishman as example.

Critical reaction to Wishman's film (and her corpus of about 15 feature films, ranging from nudist camp films in the 1960s, to sex and violence (mostly against

¹ <http://www.dvdverdict.com/reviews/bizarrofreudo.shtml>

women) “roughies” in the later 60s, a couple of commercial porn films, and exploitation dramas has varied. Late in her life she was given several retrospectives and picked up interviews and fan appreciations in the exploitation press. As with much of the critical discussion of cult cinema, attitudes range from ironic dismissal through amused tolerance to devoted fan enthusiasm.² Two sharply contrasting and well-informed discussions underline the range. Michelle Clifford, editor of *Metasex* magazine, and co-author of *Sleazoid Express: A Mind Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouses of Times Square*, denounces Wishman. Clifford argues (rants would be more accurate) that Wishman “plays the Leni Riefenstahl card” of not taking responsibility for being a pornographer, and not paying actors whose appearances in earlier films are repeated in *Let Me Die a Woman*. Clifford finds the film’s transsexuals to be freaks and delusional. In contrast academic Moya Luckett puts the best possible spin on Wishman, claiming her for feminism and a political modernist avant garde, though she too seems to have trouble accepting the transsexuals. [more, discuss in relation to narrator in LMDAW]

e understanding/reading the signifiers of “good taste” in doc’y voice over narration.

f. short mention of surrealism, narrator in *Land Without Bread*, surrealist appropriations of the abject and sentimental, post-punk, edge culture, apocalypse culture, etc. Sleaze as an inversion of the aspiration to the sublime; the way down and out, the capitalist grotesque.

² give cites: Peary, etc etc.

g. conclusion, the politics of sleazy narrators: the context and condition of sleaze.

Text/audience relationship. The relation of modernism, mass commercial culture, and cynicism.